

Transportation Conformity Working Group

Interagency Consultation

Meeting Summary

Friday, December 10, 2004
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Southern California Association of Governments
818 W 7th Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Riverside 'A' Conference Room

The Transportation Conformity Working Group (TCWG) held its monthly meeting on Friday, December 10, 2004 at SCAG's downtown offices. The following summary is intended to summarize the matters discussed. An audio recording of the entire meeting is available for review at SCAG's office.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at about 10:00 AM by the Chair, Douglas Kim, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

2.0 WELCOME AND SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE:

In Person:

Chair, Douglas Kim, MTA
Arnie Sherwood, ITS/UCB
Eric Carlson, MTA
Herman Cheng, MTA
Jose Gutierrez, LA-EAD
Leann Williams, Caltrans District 7
Mike Gainor, SCAG
Rosemary Ayala, SCAG
Sylvia Patsaouras, SCAG
Ted Harris, SCAG
Ty Shuiling, SANBAG

Via Teleconference/Videoconference:

Becky Rosen, US EPA
Dave Jesson, US EPA
Dennis Wade, CARB
Eyvonne Sells, SCAQMD
Everrett Evans, Caltrans District 12
Jean Mazur, FHWA
Karina O'Connor, US EPA
Kathryn Higgins, SCAQMD
Ken Lobeck, RCTC
Lisa Poe, SANBAG
Paul Fagan, Caltrans District 8
Toby Tiktinsky, US EPA

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments at this meeting.

4.0 CHAIR'S REPORT (Chair Douglas Kim, LA MTA)

Chair Douglas Kim, LACMTA, conveyed thanks to the federal agencies for their guidance in the conformity process.

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Approval of the October 26th Meeting Summary (Chair Douglas Kim, LA MTA)

Approved Unanimously.

6.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1 2004 RTIP Update (Rosemary Ayala, SCAG)

Rosemary Ayala (SCAG) presented an update on the 2004 RTIP, reporting that administrative and formal amendments for non-STIP projects have been finalized for all counties except Los Angeles. These amendments will be mailed out on Monday (Dec 13). SCAG staff is next preparing to process amendments for 410 Los Angeles County projects. All counties are currently working on STIP reconciliation amendments to remove the conditional approval status of the 2004 RTP and bring the RTIP into conformity with the STIP.

6.2 EPA PM2.5 Rule Update (Dave Jesson, US EPA)

Dave Jesson (EPA) provided an update on the PM2.5 implementation rule. Mr Jesson reported that designations for PM2.5 non-attainment areas will be finalized by the end of 2004. The effective dates for designations will be 60 days after the release of the publication. Draft implementation guidance and proposed SIP requirements will be available in early Spring, 2005. Substantial public commentary is expected and a long period of time between initial proposal and final document should be expected. Mr Jesson reported that a 5 year attainment plan will probably not be viable and that a 5 year extension request will likely be necessary. Arnie Sherwood (ITS) asked if it would be possible to argue that because PM2.5, like ozone, is a secondarily derived pollutant, should therefore be included under Section 2 of the Clean Air Act. Mr Jesson responded that EPA is in the process of reconsidering the PM2.5 standard formal rule-making, and is likely to make more stringent PM2.5 standards. This will give cause to re-examine appropriate timelines for implementation. Doug Kim (LACMTA) commented that it seems counter-intuitive to release designations when new standards are imminent. Mr Sherwood asked if new designations would be made with the new standards. Mr Jesson responded that designations would change with the more stringent PM2.5 standards, including more non-attainment areas. Ty Shuiling (RCTC) asked when the 2007 SIP budgets would have to be in place. Ted Harris (SCAG) answered that they must be submitted to US EPA by June 15, 2007, and that the new budgets will be effective after the US EPA determines that they are adequate. Doug Kim (LACMTA) mentioned that the SIP budget schedule might be interrupted by new PM2.5 standards and that a schematic overview of scheduling by the federal agencies would be helpful.

6.3 8-Hour Ozone Phase 2 Rule Update (Dave Jesson, US EPA)

Dave Jesson (EPA) reported that the first part of the 8-Hour Ozone guidance document has been released, and that the final Phase 2 guidance document will be released in March, 2005.

6.4 Draft 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Determination (Ted Harris, SCAG)

Ted Harris (SCAG) presented the pre-draft materials for the 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Determination, reaffirming of the conformity findings for the 2004 RTP and RTIP, and including new emissions analyses for SCAB (2021) and CVAG (2013).

6.5 Supplemental Regional Emissions Data (Ted Harris, SCAG)

Ted Harris (SCAG) presented supplemental regional emissions data which includes Growth Visioning scenarios for 2020 and 2030. Jean Mazur (FHWA) mentioned that Smart Growth/Growth Visioning assumptions were included in the analysis as extra information. Doug Kim (LACMTA) asked whether the Growth Visioning assumptions should be included in the SIP budgets for the region. Jean Mazur (FHWA) indicated that to be an EPA decision. Karina O'Connor (EPA) commented that she didn't realize that Smart Growth assumptions were included in the budgets. Mr Harris responded that they are not. Ty Shuiling (RCTC) commented that growth is not uniform across the region and historic trends are not viable. Jean Mazur (FHWA) responded that is not an issue right now since the budget can be achieved either way. Arnie Sherwood (ITS) commented that previous modeling efforts are inadequate to forecast the impact of smart growth on transportation. Mr Shuiling (RCTC) asserted that we are providing transportation systems to accommodate this kind of growth. Ms Mazur (FHWA) commented that her agency does not wish to discourage smart growth initiatives in the region, and the request for this supplemental information could be dropped over time if it can be demonstrated that the Smart Growth program is succeeding. Mr Kim (LACMTA) responded that Compass changes will be manifest over the long term, and that dramatic changes should not be expected in the short term.

6.6 Conformity Determination for Searles Valley (Ted Harris, SCAG)

Ted Harris (SCAG) presented the conformity determination for Searles Valley. Mr Harris explained that since there are currently no projects scheduled for that area, and the Build and No-Build scenarios are therefore identical, Searles Valley is now in conformity with the new emissions threshold.

6.7 Information Sharing (Group Discussion)

Doug Kim (LACMTA) mentioned that the Statewide Transportation Conformity Group meeting is to be held in San Diego on January 27th, and that the January TCWG meeting is cancelled. Ted Harris (SCAG) reported that the 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Finding will be acted on by the Regional Council in March. Mr Kim (LACMTA) asked if SCAG will be providing updates on TCM definitions and how TCM projects will be tracked in the RTIP. Sylvia Patsaouras (SCAG) responded that a TCM Working Group will be established early next year to discuss TCM issues. Mike Gainor was introduced to the group as the SCAG staff person who will be coordinating the TCM monitoring process.

7.0 COMMENT PERIOD

Jean Mazur (FHWA) reported that a certification review is conducted every 3 years to ensure that all planning process requirements are being met.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 Noon.